

## POLICE TO LOSE 10 OFFICERS IF BUDGET CUTS FINALIZED

(continued from front)

Chief Jeandron says the rapid response to misdemeanors that residents have come to expect will likely come to an end and be replaced by next-day follow-up. In some cases, residents will have to stop by City Hall to fill out reports that officers previously took on-site. Also, a smaller police force will no longer respond to non-blocking traffic accidents that involve minor property damage and non-serious injuries.

The budget cuts necessary if Measure V fails will mean a re-ordering of priorities for police detectives and undercover police resources. Major crimes and emergencies involving people or property will get the same active response they do now, but misdemeanor crimes will not.

The current police budget funds 92 sworn and 56 classified positions. The Council-approved Contingency Budget eliminates eight (8) police officers and two (2) community service officers for a savings of \$692,233. Those cuts will not be necessary if the revenue lost through rising

**The budget cuts necessary if Measure V fails will mean a re-ordering of priorities for police detectives and undercover police resources. Major crimes and emergencies involving people or property will get the same active response they do now, but misdemeanor crimes will not.**

insurance and retirement costs and state raids on city funds is replaced by voter approval of Measure V.

Jeandron emphasizes that creative scheduling of available resources, coupled with the unquestioned dedication of the city's police forces, guarantees the same immediate response in emergencies and insures that officers on the

line will have backup forces.

One change expected if the Contingency Budget becomes a reality will be police officers spending more of their time doing reports and other paperwork currently done by community service officers. More time writing reports means less time on city streets or in local neighborhoods.

Policing experts and community activists agree that law enforcement is more efficient and effective when there is day-to-day interaction between police and the community. The cuts required in the absence of additional revenue will impact that personal touch. "We have always accepted the challenge of maintaining, and even strengthening, the community connections that help make Palm Springs a great place to live," Jeandron said.

"What voters decide when they vote on Measure V on November 2 will help determine what the police department will look like next year and in the years that follow," Jeandron points out.

## COUNCIL APPROVES CONTINGENCY BUDGET PLAN

(continued from front)

**Specifically, the Contingency Budget Plan proposes the following personnel and program reductions:**

### **POLICE – SAVINGS, \$692,233**

Eliminate eight (8) police officers (including two positions currently vacant) and two (2) Community Service Officers.

### **FIRE – SAVINGS, \$615,316**

Eliminate six (6) firefighters, (one position is currently vacant), and institute a rotating station closure.

### **PUBLIC WORKS – SAVINGS, \$130,000**

Eliminate a Traffic Engineering Coordinator and a Maintenance Electrician.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION – SAVINGS, \$444,477**

Eliminate a Community Center position due to retirement, suspend nighttime lighting of ball fields; eliminate winter over-seeding of parks, downtown steam cleaning of sidewalks, afternoon trash pickup in downtown area; reduce operating hours of James O. Jessie Desert Highland Unity Center; eliminate city support for certain special events.

### **LIBRARY – SAVINGS, \$164,878**

Eliminate a Librarian, two (2) part-time Library Assistant positions; reduce operating hours, eliminate Information Literacy program; reduce Adult Literacy Program and some periodicals and other materials.

### **BUILDING AND SAFETY – SAVINGS, \$77,740**

Eliminate a Community Preservation Officer.

### **CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT – SAVINGS, \$131,225**

Eliminate an Executive Services Specialist and an Executive Assistant.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES – SAVINGS, \$79,321**

Eliminate a Human Resources Specialist position that is now vacant.

### **CHANNEL 17 – SAVINGS, \$151,177**

Suspend Channel 17 and eliminate televised public meetings and community events.



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### Letter from the Police Chief

Dear Neighbor:

Like any public service agency, the Palm Springs Police Department is made stronger by its connections to the community. The department is both more effective and more efficient because it has hundreds of conversations daily with the people who live, work, visit or just pass through the city.

That connection is tenuous. It will change if the eyes and ears we have in the community have less interaction with the people that staff our vehicles and offices.

City residents don't want fewer police on the road, or longer waits before a police officer responds to an incident. But that could be the new face of law enforcement if the city can't make up the revenue it has lost because of factors beyond its control.

The Council-approved Contingency Budget could result in a police department that is less visible and responsive. The proposed budget calls for the department to lose 10 positions: eight police officers and two community service officers.

The Palm Springs Police Department will continue to respond to major incidents. Every officer will still have a back-up force to call upon in a crisis. However, there will be less police presence at community meetings and events.

Outside of critical incidents, there will be unavoidable delays in response time. We will not be able to respond to or investigate misdemeanor crimes or minor narcotics violations. If you want a police report, you may have to go to the Police Department to file it.

For a city its size, Palm Springs has a relatively low crime rate due in part to your efficient and responsive police department. If Measure V fails and the city implements the Contingency Budget Plan, we will still be responsive, but more so in serious crises than in everyday policing of minor incidents.

Sincerely yours,

Gary Jeandron  
Chief of Police

## COUNCIL APPROVES CONTINGENCY BUDGET PLAN

The Palm Springs City Council passed a "Contingency Budget Plan" on September 22, 2004 that establishes what budget reductions would be made in the event that Measure V is not approved in the November 2, 2004 election.

Despite the best efforts of city staff to streamline spending, balancing the city's budget for this fiscal year will require either the additional revenue generated by Measure V or an additional \$3-4 million in cuts identified in the contingency budget. Already more than 20 city positions have been eliminated over the last two years, saving more than \$2.6 million annually.

The City Council took this action so Palm Springs voters would know with certainty how the city will proceed in balancing its budget if Measure V is turned down.

The Council-approved contingency plan eliminates

an additional 27.5 staff positions – nearly ten percent of the general fund workforce. This staff reduction will save the city more than \$2.5 million.

Included in these layoffs are ten police officers and six firefighters. Already, the Fire Department has eliminated two chief officer positions. Fire Department officials have said that the additional cuts would require a rotating station closure among the five Palm Springs fire stations.

Also, the contingency plan will freeze new expenditures for all programs not explicitly included in the city budget.

The city will continue to investigate options for consolidating services with neighboring cities and working to develop labor cost savings to protect against additional service cuts, City Manager David Ready said.

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## POLICE TO LOSE 10 OFFICERS IF BUDGET CUTS FINALIZED

Palm Springs Police Chief Gary Jeandron says budget cuts will change the very nature of the city's police department. "We pride ourselves on being a full-service public safety agency that works to meet all of the community's needs. We have always been a proactive agency rather than merely a response force."

A somewhat-different public safety agency could emerge if the City of Palm Springs implements the Contingency Budget Plan approved by the City Council on September 22. The cuts contained in that budget appear to be the option if voters turn down Measure V, which would temporarily increase the Utility User's Tax by three percent.

Approval of Measure V would bring in an estimated \$3.5 million a year, eliminating the need for immediate budget cuts as identified in the contingency budget.

"In some ways," Chief Jeandron says, "The public safety cuts in the budget can be viewed as a lot of small cuts. But often, the sum of many little things can be greater than the parts." The Chief sees voters deciding on November 2 what kind of police force is acceptable and appropriate for Palm Springs.

There will be some evident changes in policing if the Contingency Budget takes effect. For instance, Neighborhood Watch, which has been a very successful community program, will not be the same without the additional revenue the city would gain from Measure V. If the department's budget is cut, police officers will be less available for meetings and orientation sessions to set up programs or update information for existing programs.

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## EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIMES COULD GROW WITH CUTS PROPOSED

The elimination of six firefighter positions resulting in a rotating closure among Palm Springs' five fire stations could become a reality if Measure V is not passed on November 2.

The loss of these positions, which are identified in the Contingency Budget Plan approved by the City Council on September 22, will take effect if the city cannot find additional revenue to make up for a budget shortfall caused by increased costs and the state's continuing raid on city funds. Measure V would create additional city revenues by temporarily increasing the Utility User's Tax from five to eight percent for three years.

The Palm Springs Fire Department's ability to react 'offensively' – responding in force to a fire to knock it down immediately – will be tested if budget cuts are required and the department loses six firefighters. Fire Chief Blake Goetz says a rotating closure of the city's fire stations could increase response times, as well as impact staff morale.

Three of the city's five stations are manned by two-person crews with an engine. The Downtown station has a two-person ladder truck, plus a two-person paramedics squad. The Airport fire station has three persons on a ladder truck. Although the city has two-person engine companies, a number of larger cities have accepted and reached the National Fire Protection Association guideline of three-person engine companies and four-person ladder companies.

The Palm Springs Fire Department responds to fires and related crises across a city of 101 square miles, though virtually all the fire responses are in the 28 square mile urban area. Last year, the department dispatched equipment to 6,500 calls.

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# CITY BUDGET OVERVIEW

Complicated by escalating costs and the decision of the State Legislature to keep local tax dollars that it had previously returned to cities, the Palm Springs City Council continues to struggle with a sizeable budget deficit. Despite substantial reductions in personnel made last year, revenues still do not match expected expenditures for this fiscal year.

The budget problem facing the city is, in large part, the result of events and circumstances beyond the control of the City of Palm Springs. It has been exacerbated by recent increases in health, retirement and insurance costs that have widened the gap between revenues and expenditures in a budget already suffering from the loss of revenues diverted to the state.

Palm Springs today finds itself in a position

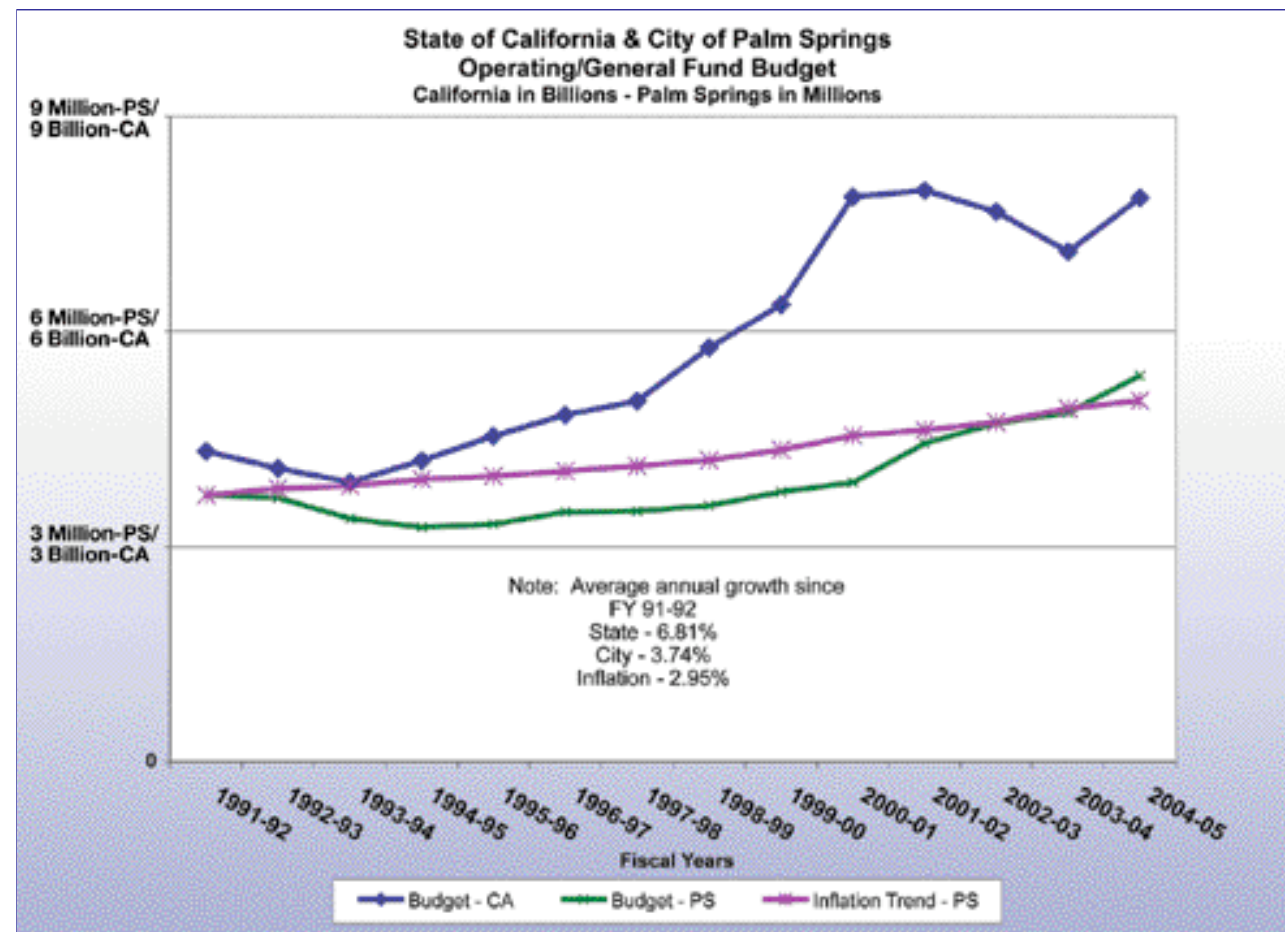
6.81 percent.

About \$4 million a year in Palm Springs tax dollars is going to the state now with very little of it coming back from Sacramento.

The Palm Springs City Council has presented two plans to balance the city budget and voters will be an important part of the decision-making process.

Measure V on the November 2 ballot will, if approved, increase the Utility User's Tax (UUT) from five to eight percent. City residents would see their monthly bills utility bills increase by an estimated \$7.20, starting in February 2005 for three years. This would generate sufficient funds to balance the budget and maintain current levels of police and fire protection, and other city services.

Absent the additional revenue the city would



The City of Palm Springs has worked hard to keep spending under control. This graph shows that city spending has grown at a rate consistent with inflation over the past 14 years. By comparison, spending by the State of California has grown at a much faster rate.

whereit cannot simply and easily cut expenditures to make up the predicted \$3.5 million budget shortfall. The budget cuts already made in the last 18 months – totaling about \$2.5 million – came from nearly every city department, except public safety. Future budget cuts to address the remaining shortfall would have a more noticeable impact on all city services including police and fire protection.

City Finance Director Tom Kanarr points out that liability insurance costs have tripled, employee pension costs have grown significantly, particularly in the past three fiscal years, in large part because of the poor performance of the stock market in 2000 and 2001. In addition, health insurance costs grew at an annual rate of 15 percent for about three years.

An analysis of the budget histories of the City of Palm Springs and the State of California shows that since FY91-92, the city budget has grown at an average annual rate of 3.74 percent, while the state's budget has increased at an annual rate of

realize through a temporary increase in the Utility User's Tax, additional budget reductions will be necessary. This summer, the City Council recognized that it needed to have city departments again review their budgets. The Contingency Budget Plan (CBP) approved on September 22 was their reasoned alternative should Measure V not meet with voter approval.

The CBP spreads budget reductions across all programs, including public safety—police and fire—that account for more than half of the city's \$53.8 million budget.

“Unfortunately, these reductions will have a negative impact on the services we provide to the community,” City Manager David Ready said.

Enforcement of city codes and regulations will be affected. Monthly steam cleaning of the downtown sidewalks and afternoon trash pick-up will be eliminated. Library hours may have to be reduced and some programs cut completely.

# ALTERNATIVES TO UUT INCREASE HAVE BEEN PROPOSED

Over the course of recent months, a wide variety of possible solutions have been offered to remedy Palm Springs' approximately \$3.5 million budget shortfall. These options include:

- Requiring employees to contribute towards their retirement benefit.
- Capping health benefits for retirees.
- Restructuring the city's health insurance program to reduce the amount the city contributes to employee health benefits.
- Eliminate the police “take home” patrol car program.

Implementation of these options would require negotiations with the city's six (6) employee bargaining units.

In addition to these options, some in the community believe that the city should solicit proposals from the County for police and fire services. For example, in Riverside County, 11 cities contract for law enforcement and 17 cities contract for fire and emergency medical services.

As an alternative to contracting out for police and fire services, the city has entered into preliminary discussions with several neighboring jurisdictions regarding the possible consolidation of its 911 dispatch center and other public safety services, including jail operations.

The City Council continues to explore these options and several other cost savings ideas. However, until these options can be implemented, the budget shortfall will remain. As a result, the City Council decided to place Measure V, which would increase the Utility User's Tax by three percent for three years, on the November 2 ballot to raise the necessary revenues to offset the city's projected shortfall.

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS UTILITY USER'S TAX RATE HISTORY		
RATE	FROM	TO
5.00%	July 1, 2000	Present
4.50%	September 1, 1998	June 30, 2000
5.00%	October 1, 1993	August 31, 1998
0.00%	Jnuary 1, 1989	Septamber 30, 1993
3.00%	October 1, 1986	December 31, 1988

## EL CONSEJO APRUEBA EL PLAN DE PRESUPUESTO PARA CONTINGENCIA

El 22 de septiembre de 2004, el Consejo Municipal de Palm Springs aprobó un “Plan de Presupuesto para Contingencia” que establece el tipo de reducción presupuestaria que se realizaría en caso de que la Iniciativa de ley V no fuera aprobada en la elección del 2 de noviembre de 2004.

A pesar de los grandes esfuerzos realizados por los empleados municipales para reducir el gasto, equilibrar el presupuesto municipal para el presente año fiscal requerirá de los ingresos adicionales generados por la Iniciativa de ley V o bien de \$3 a \$4 millones más en recortes que se especifican en el presupuesto para contingencia. Ya han sido eliminados más de 20 puestos municipales en los últimos dos años, lo que

representó un ahorro anual de \$2.6 millones.

El Consejo Municipal tomó esta medida para que los votantes de Palm Springs supieran con certeza la manera en que la ciudad procederá a equilibrar su presupuesto si la Iniciativa de ley V no fuera aprobada, según comentó David Ready, Administrador Municipal.

El plan de contingencia aprobado por el Consejo elimina unos 27.5 puestos adicionales – alrededor del diez por ciento de la fuerza laboral del fondo general. Esta reducción de personal le ahorrará a la ciudad más de \$2.5 millones.

Estos despidos afectan a ocho oficiales de policía y seis bomberos. El Departamento de Bomberos ya ha eliminado dos puestos de

oficiales en jefe. Los funcionarios del Departamento de Bomberos informaron que los recortes adicionales requerirían el cierre de una estación por vez en forma alternada entre las cinco estaciones de bomberos de Palm Springs.

Asi mismo, el plan de contingencia congelaría cualquier nuevo gasto de todo programa que no estuviese incluido explícitamente en el presupuesto municipal.

La ciudad continuará contemplando alternativas para consolidar servicios con las ciudades vecinas y trabajando para generar ahorros en los costos de mano de obra para prevenir recortes adicionales a los servicios, según afirmó Ready.

## EL DEPARTAMENTO DE POLICÍA PERDERÁ 10 PUESTOS DE OFICIALES SI SE ESTABLECE EL RECORTE PRESUPUESTARIO

El Jefe del Departamento de Policía de Palm Springs, Gary Jeandron, afirma que los recortes presupuestarios cambiarán la propia naturaleza del departamento de policía de esa ciudad. “Nos enorgullece ser una agencia de servicio integral en pos de la seguridad pública que se esfuerza por satisfacer todas las necesidades de la comunidad. Hemos sido siempre una agencia proactiva y no una simple fuerza que responde a emergencias.”

Si la Ciudad de Palm Springs implementa el Plan de Presupuesto para Contingencia que fuera aprobado por el Consejo Municipal el 22 de septiembre esto podría dar origen a una agencia de seguridad pública un tanto diferente. Los recortes establecidos en dicho presupuesto parecen ser la opción si los votantes rechazan la Iniciativa de Ley V, lo cual incrementaría en forma temporaria el impuesto de los usuarios de servicios públicos en un 3 por ciento.

La aprobación de la Iniciativa de Ley V generaría un estimado de \$3.5 millones al año eliminando así la necesidad de recortes presupuestarios inmediatos según se especifican en el presupuesto para contingencia.

“En cierta forma,” comenta el Jefe Jeandron, “los recortes del presupuesto en la seguridad pública podrían verse como varios cortes pequeños. Pero a menudo, la suma de varias

cantidades pequeñas puede resultar ser mucho más que el todo. El Jefe Jeandron anticipa que el 2 de noviembre los votantes decidirán qué clase de fuerza policial es aceptable y adecuada para la ciudad de Palm Springs.

Se producirán cambios evidentes en la vigilancia policial si el Presupuesto para Contingencia entra en vigencia. Por ejemplo, el tan exitoso programa comunitario Vigilancia en el Vecindario ya no será el mismo sin el ingreso adicional que la ciudad obtendría a partir de la Iniciativa de Ley V. Si se recorta el presupuesto del departamento, los oficiales de policía ya no tendrán la misma disponibilidad para asistir a las reuniones o a las sesiones de orientación con el fin de establecer programas o actualizar información para los programas existentes.

El Jefe Jeandron afirma que la rápida respuesta policial a llamados por actos delictivos menores a la que los residentes se han acostumbrado se verá afectada muy probablemente siendo reemplazada por seguimientos al día siguiente. En algunos casos, los residentes tendrán que acercarse a la oficina municipal para completar informes que los oficiales antes realizaban en el lugar de los hechos. Además, una fuerza policial reducida ya no responderá en accidentes automovilísticos que no bloqueen el tránsito y que solo hayan causado daños materiales y

personales menores.

En caso de no aprobarse la Iniciativa de Ley V, los recortes presupuestarios necesarios implicarán un reordenamiento de las prioridades para los detectives policiales y los recursos de agentes secretos. Los actos delictivos y emergencias de mayor importancia que involucran personas o propiedades recibirán la misma pronta respuesta de siempre, pero no así los delitos menores.

El actual presupuesto policial cubre 92 puestos de servicio bajo juramento y 56 puestos clasificados. El Presupuesto para Contingencia aprobado por el Consejo elimina diez (10) puestos de oficiales de policía y dos (2) puestos de oficiales de servicio comunitario, es decir, un ahorro de \$692.233. Estos recortes no serían necesarios si los ingresos perdidos a causa del aumento de costos de seguro y jubilación y la intervención estatal en los fondos de la ciudad son reemplazados por la aprobación de la Iniciativa de Ley V por parte de los votantes.

Jeandron hace hincapié en que una planificación creativa de los recursos disponibles, sumada a la dedicación incuestionable de las fuerzas policiales de la ciudad, garantiza la misma respuesta inmediata en casos de emergencia y asegura que los oficiales en servicio contarán con personal de refuerzo.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIMES COULD GROW WITH CUTS PROPOSED

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There will be obvious signs if a reduction in force takes place. A rotating closure means a sign will be posted outside the closed station, which will be out of service for a 24-hour period.

Currently, the city's fire fighting forces have been successful because they take the offensive. Typically, attacking fires in force means that four of the city's five engines will respond, even to a single-family structure fire. That allows firefighters to quickly attack the fire, knocking it down before it can grow out of control.

Budget cuts mean that some responses will involve fewer personnel. It also means some increases in response time as the department marshals its forces from one less station. A response by a smaller force will result in more ‘defensive’ firefighting activities.

As the city's population grows, the call load is likely to increase, which will further stress the department's ability to respond to simultaneous calls. Consequently, the city may have to rely on resources from surrounding communities for response to certain emergencies.

Goetz says fewer trained personnel could negatively impact the city's ISO (Insurance Services Office) rating. “It's that rating, based on dispatch capability, the water system, and the fire fighting force and equipment, that determines the fire insurance rates for commercial buildings,” Chief Goetz notes. Although Palm Springs has improved its rating from the early 1980s, a staffing cut could lower the city's rating and result in higher insurance rates for commercial buildings.

The Council-approved Contingency Budget

calls for a \$647,716 cut in the Fire Department budget if additional revenues are not available. That's about a 10 percent reduction in the 60-person department.

Yet another loss if budget cuts are instituted will be elimination of the reserve firefighting program. The absence of those nine firefighters, all of them fire academy-trained, will increase the demand on a diminished force of full-time firefighters. Loss of the reserves will mean few resources for a recall and for special assignments, like the Fourth of July.

Aside from the difficulties involved in moving firefighters from station to station, the idea of having fewer personnel responding to more fires is a circumstance Goetz seeks to avoid.